



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Policy Manual

Manual:	CP&P	Child Protection and Permanency	Effective Date: 11-15-2021
Volume:	III	Case Management	
Chapter:	C	Case Oversight and Management	Revised Date:
Subchapter:	4	Locating a Missing Child/Family and Searching	N/A
Issuance:	400	Missing Young Adults 18-21 Years Old	

Purpose:

This issuance provides critical information to providers, Workers, and other relevant individuals to assist them in knowing what to do when a young adult receiving services from the Division of Child Protection and Permanency becomes missing.

Authority:

- Title 30 at N.J.S.A. 30:4C-2.3

Policy:

A. Determining if a Young Adult is Missing

1. A young adult may be considered “missing” if he or she has ceased communication with the provider, their family, other close connections and the Division. Through cursory investigation, the Division shall explore the circumstances around the young adult’s change in communication to determine if they have voluntarily ceased communication with the Division.
2. If the Division obtains information indicating the young adult has made a conscious decision to cease communication and not disclose his or her whereabouts to the Division, then the young adult is not considered missing and the case can be closed in accordance with Case Closure for Young Adults Age 18-21.
3. If there is no indication that the young adult intentionally ceased communication, then he or she should be considered missing and search efforts initiated.

4. If reasonable efforts to locate the missing young adult should fail, then the case can be closed in accordance with Case Closure for Young Adults Age 18-21.

B. Resource/Non-Family Based Placement/Treatment Provider Obligations When Young Adult May be Missing

1. When a provider determines a young adult may be missing, the provider shall notify CP&P immediately regarding the circumstances surrounding the young adult's disappearance.
2. The Worker shall inform his or her Supervisor of the current situation and conduct a cursory investigation to determine if the young adult is missing as outlined in this policy.
3. The provider shall also immediately inform CP&P if the young adult returns.

C. Notification of Missing Status

1. After determining that a young adult is missing, the Worker shall:
 - i) Notify Local Law Enforcement or the New Jersey State Police within 24 hours if the provider has not already done so, and provide them with the information specified on CP&P [Form 2-3](#) (unless there is indication that the young adult may be harmed at which time the call to local or state police should be immediate).
 - ii) Also notify the Human Service Police via the New Jersey State Human Services Police - [Request for Police Service Form](#) and your Security Advisor in writing via email within 24 hours.

Note: Whenever possible the Worker shall conference the case situation with the assigned DAG prior to contacting the police. NJ is a state that won't notify immigration authorities of the young adult's immigration status if he or she is undocumented. Other states may inform immigration authorities of the young adult's undocumented status. In any case, notify the DAG assigned to the case by the close of the business day.

2. The DAG informs the court and the young adult's law guardian of the young adult's missing status.
3. Notify the young adult's parent or most recent legal guardian by the close of the business day, as appropriate if there is a current relationship (See Disclosure of Client Information).
4. The Worker also informs the parent or most recent legal guardian of the circumstances surrounding the young adult's missing status and solicits assistance from the parent or guardian in trying to locate the young adult (e.g., Do you know his or her social media names, who are the young adult's close friends, etc.?)

D. Return of the Young Adult and Debriefing

1. Every young adult determined to be missing for any length of time shall be interviewed by the Worker after being located or having returned.
2. The Worker debriefs the young adult and documents the information learned including:
 - i) What factors led to the young adult's missing episode;
 - ii) Where the young adult was staying;
 - iii) Who the young adult was with;
 - iv) Under what circumstances was the young adult there and for how long; and Whether there is indication of possible human trafficking.
3. Efforts shall be undertaken to address any precipitating factors related to the young adult's missing episode. If appropriate, the Worker reviews the Voluntary Service Agreement with the young adult and emphasizes the importance of maintaining contact with the Division.
4. If the debriefing process indicates that a young adult has been victimized by or placed at risk of victimization by sex or labor trafficking, the young adult shall be immediately referred to appropriate supportive services.

Note: Worker shall discuss with the young adult whether he or she wants to report victimization information to law enforcement and assist in making the report if the young adult agrees.

E. Documentation into NJ SPIRIT

The Worker shall document all activities into NJ SPIRIT to keep the record current (e.g., contacting law enforcement, relatives, schools, young adult debrief etc.)

Procedures:

1) Missing Young Adult Reporting and Management Procedures

The following steps shall be taken when it is determined that a young adult is missing.

a) Worker

- a. If the missing notification begins at SCR, the screener notifies the Area Director and Assistant Area Director via internal alerts by the close of business, or the end of the screener's shift during non-business hours.
 - i. The Screening Worker advises the provider to contact the local police if there is an indication that the young adult may be harmed by themselves or others.
 - ii. Upon receiving the missing notification from SCR, or if the Worker has reason to believe the young adult is missing, the Worker contacts all known connections for the young adult to locate them. If the young adult is still considered missing after

these contacts and 24 hours has passed, the Worker makes sure the young adult has been reported missing to law enforcement immediately.

- iii. If there is indication that the young adult may be harmed the call to local police should be immediate. The Worker shall obtain both the police report number and the name of the law enforcement agency contacted.
- iv. Contact the young adult's school to inform them that he or she is currently missing, if applicable. This shall be done immediately upon learning the young adult is missing, if applicable.
- v. Contact the DAG if the case is in active litigation by the close of business once learning the young adult is missing.
- vi. Inform the parent/guardian of the young adult's missing status by the close of business once learning the young adult is missing.
- vii. Notify relatives, service providers, etc., to advise them of the situation, and to see if they can provide information to help locate the young adult within 24 hours once learning the young adult is missing.
- viii. Document all work in NJ SPIRIT by the next business day once learning that the young adult is missing.
- ix. Update the Missing Person Information in NJ SPIRIT once it has been determined that the young adult is in missing status and document it on a contact activity note by the next business day.
- x. Obtain a report number from law enforcement. **Note:** Go to the address management window to document the young adult is in missing status and document on a contact activity note.
- xi. Advise the parent/guardian that the young adult has been returned or is safe at an established location by the close of business once learning of the young adult's return.
- xii. Advise the law enforcement entity that initially took the report, and any other relevant parties that the young adult has been returned or is safe at an established location by the close of business once learning of the young adult's return.

Related Policy

- [CP&P-VI-B-1-600](#), Case Closure for Young Adults Age 18-21
- [CP&P-IX-G-1-100](#), Disclosure of Client Information

Forms and Attachments:

- CP&P [Form 2-3](#), Missing Person Form

Key Terms (Definitions):

- **Parent:** This term means a birth, legal parent, putative father, or legal guardian.
- **Worker:** For the purposes of this policy issuance. Worker means the assigned Worker or in the absence of the Worker, the assigned covering Worker.
- **Missing Young adult:** This term refers to a person 18 years of age or older who has had no communication with the Worker, placement provider, their family and other close connections.
- **Provider:** This term refers to an individual or agency who is providing housing to a young adult but does not include a parent.
- **Search:** This term means the activities undertaken to locate a missing person.

Policy History:

- N/A